

March 23, 2009

Education Committee
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding Raised Bill 1142 SECTION 4 & 5 OPPOSED

Raised Bill 1142, Section 4 (d)(1)

Shifts the burden of proof in a due process onto the party who initiated the hearing - which is almost without exception the parents of the child.

Raised Bill 1142, Section 5 (b)

Changes the current requirement that school districts provide special ed services through the school year in which a child turns 21 to exactly their 21st birthday. Does not provide an appropriate for DDS to ramp up services to meet the needs of this group.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the parent of a child with autism, and am in **OPPOSITION** of Raised Bill 1142 **SECTION 4 & 5**. If passed, it would severely limit my ability to advocate on the part of my son to receive a free and appropriate education.

Please note that it is already INCREDIBLY difficult to be an advocate, emotionally and financially. As it is today, it is already financially burdensome for a parent to bring a hearing against the school. This is only done after every other avenue has been depleted. I had to produce \$40,000 towards lawyer's fees just to commit to the process. The school only has to schedule their lawyer whom they already have on retainer. Therefore, financially, the process is already slanted towards to the school district. Please do not pass this section of the bill.

Additionally, please do not pass section 5 (B) as it would leave a hole in services at a critical transition time.

Thank you,

Jill Correnti
Trumbull
(203) 380-0112